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MYRIAM ROSEN-AYALON

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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE EARLY HISTORY OF ISLAM IN INDIA

Y. FRIEDMANN

Classical Muslim historians have paid scant attention to the beginnings of Islam in India. Their relative neglect of the subject was due mainly to the fact that India did not become an important part of the Muslim world prior to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century AD. Even al-Balādhurī, who devoted a whole chapter in his *Futūḥ al-Buldān*¹ to the early conquest of Sind and subsequent events there, has furnished us with very little actual information concerning the early history of Islam on the subcontinent. A considerable part of his material is anecdotal and, though al-Balādhurī describes events that took place in Sind, he has little to say about the early development of Islam there. The traditionists on whom al-Balādhurī's account is based are keenly interested in the names of the persons who led the early military expeditions to India or in the question of who was the first warrior to enter an Indian city or to storm an Indian fort; these traditions are important to assess the contribution of that particular warrior and, by extension, of his tribe, to early *jihād* and are therefore important for the standing of his descendants in the Islamic state of later times. Only in very few instances does al-Balādhurī refer to matters such as the relationship between the Arab conquerors and the local population, or the all-important question of conversion to Islam.² The information provided by al-Ṭabarī is even more fragmentary. In the volumes dealing with pre-Islamic history, al-Ṭabarī extensively records traditions concerning Adam's expulsion from Paradise and his descent in India or Ceylon,³ and gives some information about the relations between India and the ancient kingdoms of Iran and Yaman.⁴ In the Islamic period al-Ṭabarī's

¹ Ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1866), 431-446.

² Cf. Ira M. Lapidus, "The conversion of Egypt to Islam," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), 248: "The history of conversion to Islam, in Egypt or elsewhere, remains a surprisingly obscure subject on which Arabic sources almost never comment."

³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* (ed. de Goeje) I, 119-127.

⁴ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 440-441, 652-653, 775, 894.

material is restricted to occasional, brief references to military campaigns waged in India⁵ and to statements concerning the appointments and dismissals of governors.⁶ The information supplied by al-Ya'qūbī is more abundant. We can glean from his *Ta'rikh* numerous details about the all too frequent changes of governors,⁷ about the rebellions of the Zutt⁸ and about the effect which the perennial feud between Qays and Yaman had on the internal situation in the Indian province.⁹ However, al-Ya'qūbī also writes from the vantage point of the 'Abbāsī capital and events in Sind interest him only to the extent that they are relevant to important developments in the 'Abbāsī empire. The contribution of late Indo-Persian historiography is not significantly greater. Firishta says, for instance, regarding Multān, that Islam appeared there at the time of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim. As for the period between him and Maḥmūd of Ghaznā, "no one recorded the affairs of Multān in the history books; neither are there abundant oral traditions (*wa ba'd az ū tā 'ahd-i sulṭān maḥmūd-i ghaznawī aḥwāl-i multān-rā hich kas dar kutub-i ta'rikh na-nivishtah wa dar afwāh nīz hikāyāt-i ān zamān dā'ir wa sā'ir nīst*).¹⁰ The 17th century historian Baqā',¹¹ speaking of the same province, says that Islam began there with Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim; Multān was then under the rule of the Qarāmiṭa, who were destroyed by Maḥmūd of Ghaznā. No additional information about the early period is adduced by him.¹² The early history of the province of Sind fared no better. In the *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī* we read that history books do not provide information about the governors of Sind. Only the *Ṭabaqāt-i Bahādurshāhī*, we are told, provides scant information about them: It gives the names of a few persons who ruled Sind and specifies their terms of office.¹³

Despite this apparent dearth of information, which is unlikely to be

⁵ *Ibid.* II, 1200, 1256, 1267, 1271, 1274-1275; III, 460-461.

⁶ *Ibid.* II, 73, 94; III, 1100, 1233, 359, 363, 380, 461.

⁷ Ed. Houtsma (Leiden, 1883) II, 493-494.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 479-480.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 493-494.

¹⁰ Firishta, *Ta'rikh* (ed. Briggs) (Bombay, 1831) II, 625-626. Cf. Ghulām Bāsīt, *Tawārikh-i Mamālik-i Hindūstān*, BM Add. 27250, fol. 49a-49b.

¹¹ See on him Storey, *Persian Literature* (London, 1953) I, 131-134.

¹² Baqā', *Mir'āt-i Jahān Numā*, India Office Ms. Ethé 126, fol. 305b. See also Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, Bibliotheca Indica 223 (Calcutta, 1935) III, 521-522.

¹³ Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad, *op. cit.* III, 512. Cf. Nūr al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī, *Zubdat al-Tawārikh*, BM Ms. Add. 10580, fol. 317b-318a; al-Shīrāzī, *Aḥsan al-Tawārikh*, BM Ms. Or. 1649, fols. 447b-448a.

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supplemented by non-Muslim sources, students of medieval Indian history have understandably been eager to explain the initial success of Muslim arms on the subcontinent and to reconstruct the early history of Muslim settlement there. Particular attention was paid to the processes of conversion to Islam and to the emerging relations between the Muslims and their Indian neighbours. The purpose of this article is to reconsider the various aspects of the history of Islam in India, prior to the invasions of Maḥmūd of Ghaznā, in the light of the meagre evidence available.

I

The remoteness of India from the central Islamic lands, the fact that the land route to it led through the vast desert of Makrān, and thus almost inevitably a sea crossing was necessary in order to arrive there, were the prime factors inhibiting the Muslims from embarking upon major military expeditions to India in the early years of Islamic history. The latter factor, especially, looms large in early Arabic sources. The first naval expedition to India took place during the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.¹⁴ According to al-Balādhuri's account, it was unauthorized by the khalifa, and its commander — though victorious — drew sharp rebuke from 'Umar, for whom the very idea of sending men across the sea was repugnant because of the dangers involved in sea travel.¹⁵ The opposition of subsequent Muslim rulers to military expeditions to India was not as resolute as that of 'Umar, partly because some of the later forays did not involve sea voyage. 'Uthmān authorized an exploratory expedition to the "Indian frontier" (*thaghr al-hind*), which apparently took the land route; since it describes in its report an arid, inhospitable land, it probably did not go beyond the desert of Makrān. The discouraging report of this expedition led 'Uthmān to refrain from authorizing further raids into India. During the reign of 'Alī, a successful military raid to the same area took place with the permission of the khalifa, though not on his initiative.¹⁶ Several raids of apparently minor pro-

¹⁴ For a controversy regarding its exact date — 15 or 23 AH — see Mohammad Ishāq, "A peep into the first Arab expedition to India under the companions of the Prophet," *Islamic Culture* 19 (1945), 109–114; and Balaoch Nabi Bakhsh as-Sindi, "The probable date of the first Arab expedition to India," *Islamic Culture* 20 (1946), 250–266.

¹⁵ Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 432; and my "Minor problems in al-Balādhuri's account of the conquest of Sind," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 45 (1970), 253–255.

¹⁶ Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 432.

portions were carried out during the reign of Mu'āwiya. "Sind and Hind" were included in the areas placed by Mu'āwiya under the jurisdiction of Ziyād b. Abīhi.¹⁷ It is not clear, however, whether this had any practical implications. The raids carried out at this time involved mainly the areas of Sijistān and Makrān; the deepest point was attained by Sinān b. Salama b. al-Muḥabbiq al-Hudhālī and al-Mundhir b. al-Jārūd, who reached the city of Quṣḍār.¹⁸ These raids did not result in permanent occupation of any areas in India proper.

Though the unwillingness of the first caliphs to raid India diminished with the passage of time, it was only during the reign of al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik that a major military operation against India was undertaken, backed by the whole might of the caliphate. According to al-Balādhurī's account, the operation was brought about by an incident involving a ship carrying Muslim women, which had been seized by pirates off the shores of Sind.¹⁹ Al-Ḥajjāj demanded that Dāhir, the king of Sind, use his authority to release the prisoners; Dāhir replied that he was unable to force the pirates to submit to his will. This reply was considered unsatisfactory by al-Ḥajjāj, who decided to attack Sind. After two unsuccessful attempts, he appointed the youthful Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī to head the expedition, gathering a large force and making careful preparations to ensure success. One part of the troops took the land route, while another, together with weapons and equipment, was sent by sea. The first Indian city to be stormed was the port of Daybul. The immediate establishment of a Muslim quarter and the erection of a mosque in the city gave the conquest of Daybul an air of permanence which was lacking during the earlier campaigns. From Daybul the Arab army advanced on Nīrūn and Sadūsān, crossed the Indus and defeated

the army of Dāhir, Muḥammad b. al-Sāwandārī, Basma which latter was father of Hindu pilgrims ruined in the wake of al-Balādhurī.²¹

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¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* II, 73-94.

¹⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 434. For the city of Quṣḍār, see Guy le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), 331-332; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Sūrat al-Arḍ* (Leiden, 1948), 324-325.

¹⁹ These women, whose fathers are said to have died while trading in Ceylon, were sent by the king of Ceylon to Iraq as a gesture of friendship. The whole episode is a precious piece of information regarding the extent of Muslim trade with Asian countries in the earliest period of Islam.

It may be pointed out that Indo-Muslim historiography has also a different version of this incident. According to it, the persons seized by the pirates were newly-converted Muslims who had set out on pilgrimage from Ceylon. Some of them fled from captivity, came to al-Ḥajjāj and asked for help (*chandān naw muslim kih az sarandip rawānā-yi ḥajj shudah būdand asir sākhṭah wa jam'ī kih az dast-i kuffār rahā'ī yāftah gurikhtah pīsh-i ḥajjāj ibn yūsuf raftah dād khwāh shudand*). Ghulām Bāsiṭ, *op. cit.*, fol. 44a.

²⁰ For an attempt at these places, see Elliot (London, 1876) I, 353.

²¹ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*

²² The best modern edition of al-Thaqafī and the See also S.M. Jafar, *queror of Sind*, "Islam

²³ Ibn Qutayba, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Ed. Daudpota Ms. Ethé 435.

²⁵ Muḥammad al-Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī *huwa fī al-sābi'ah* (1968), 25-27; Akbar (not available to the

²⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*

the army of Dāhir, who was killed in battle. Other cities conquered by Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim were Rāwar, Brahmanābād, Alrūr, Baghrūr, Sāwandari, Basmad, Sakka, Baylamān, Sūrast Kiraj²⁰ and Multān, which latter was famous for its temple and served as an important center of Hindu pilgrimage. It is noteworthy that some of these cities were ruined in the wake of the conquest and were desolate at the time of al-Balādhuri.²¹

The Indian campaign of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim has been dealt with extensively in modern historical literature.²² Its commander has become a paragon of a successful military career at an unusually early age in classical Arabic literature.²³ It also gave rise to a famous medieval Indo-Muslim history, known as the *Chachnāmah*.²⁴ Modern writers in Arabic and Urdu have extolled the young conqueror's statesmanship and his alleged religious tolerance.²⁵ Though many questions regarding this campaign must remain unanswered until new sources hopefully come to light, our knowledge of it is much more detailed than that of the immediately subsequent period in the history of Islam in India.

The downfall of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim after the accession of Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik weakened the Muslim hold on Sind. The army which fought there, composed as it was from the supporters of al-Ḥajjāj, was denied caliphal support: A message sent to it by Sulaymān read: "Sow and plow (where you are), for Syria is not yours (anymore)" (*izra'ū wa-ḥrathū fa-lā shām lakum*).²⁶ A new expeditionary force was sent to the Indus region — it is not clear whether the enemy was a local Indian prince or Muslims disloyal to the new caliph — (*fa-wajjaha*

²⁰ For an attempt to surmount the difficulties involved in the identification of these places, see Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its own Historians* (London, 1876) I, 353–404.

²¹ Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 435–441.

²² The best modern account is by Francesco Gabrieli, "Muhammad ibn Qāsim ath-Thaqafī and the Arab conquest of Sind," *East and West* 15 (1964–65), 281–295. See also S.M. Jafar, "End of 'Imād-ud-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim, the Arab conqueror of Sind," *Islamic Culture* 19 (1945), 54–68.

²³ Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-Akhbār* (Cairo, 1925) I, 229; Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 347.

²⁴ Ed. Daudpota (Delhi, 1939) (now very rare); BM Ms. Or. 1787; India Office Ms. Ethé 435.

²⁵ Muḥammad al-Qāḍī, *Baṭal Thaqif* (Baghād, 1946); 'Umar Abū al-Naṣr, *Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, fātiḥ al-hind wa al-qā'id al-'amm li-l-jaysh al-'arabī wa huwa fi al-sābi'ah 'ashrah min 'umrihi* (Beirut, 1947); Ikrām, *Āb-i Kawthar* (Lahore, 1968), 25–27; Akbar Muḥammad Khān, *Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim* (Lahore, 1961) (not available to the present writer).

²⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* II, 1274–1275.

sulaymān ḥabīb b. muhallab ilayhā wa qātala qawman kānū nāḥiyata mihrān) — and to arrest Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim.²⁷ Some of the Indian princes who submitted to Muslim rule, under the momentum of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim's invasion, found it possible to regain their independence.²⁸ After Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim's dismissal and death, Jaysinha,²⁹ the son of Dāhir, recovered some of the territories lost by this father. The Umayyad caliphs continued, however, to appoint governors for the province of Sind. Frequently they had to reconquer cities which had revoked the agreements entered upon with Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim,³⁰ or to fight princes who had embraced Islam when the Muslim power in Sind was at its height but had now returned to their ancestral faith.³¹ Though Junayd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Murri, who was governor of Sind during the first years of Hishām's reign, sent expeditions to Ujayn and Mālwa,³² the position of the Muslims in India seems to have deteriorated towards the end of the Umayyad period. During the governorship of Tamīm b. Zayd, Junayd's successor, "the Muslims left the land of Hind³³ and abandoned their centers . . ." (*kharaja al-muslimūn 'an bilād al-hind wa rafaḍū marākizahum*).³⁴ The stability of the Muslim rule of the province was adversely affected by the upheavals which took place in Iraq and Syria during the latter part of the Umayyad period. 'Amr b. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, who was governor of the province at the time of the murder of al-Walid (AD 744), committed suicide for fear of torture, after the arrival of the new governor appointed by Yazid.³⁵ The precariousness of the Muslim position is also reflected in the necessity to build two new cities, al-Maḥfūzah and al-Manṣūrah, because "the people of Hind, except for the people of Qaṣṣa, apostatized" and the

²⁷ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* (ed. Houtsma) (Leiden, 1883) II, 356.

²⁸ Bhakkari, *Ta'rikh-i Sind* (Bombay, 1938), 31; Kāmwarikhān, *Haft Gulshan*, India Office Ms. Ethé 394, fol. 335b.

²⁹ This is the correct reading of the defective حشيه of al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 441. It was first suggested by Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 201, n. 3; then it was taken over by S.Q. Fatimi, "Two letters from the Maharaja to the Khalifa," *Islamic Studies* 2 (1963), 139–140, n. 25.

³⁰ Such as Kīraj. See al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 442.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 442.

³² *Ibid.*, 442.

³³ This term probably refers to the regions east of the Indus. See Maqbūl Aḥmad, "Hind," *ET* III, 404. This view can be supported by the statement of Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Paris, 1861) I, 380: *wa al-sind mimma yalī al-islām thumma al-hind*.

³⁴ Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, 443–444.

³⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* II, 103.

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³⁶ Al-Balādhuri, of Manṣūra see also (1968), 25–33.

³⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *op.*

³⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *op.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1837.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1778, 18

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1809, 18

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1854.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1883–18

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* III, 72, 7

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Muslims did not find any safe place for themselves in the hostile Hindu environment (*wa qad kafara ahl al-hind illā ahl qaṣṣah fa-lam yara [al-ḥakam b. 'awānah] li-'l-muslimīn malja'an yalja'ūn ilayhi*). These cities served as bases for raids on areas whose population tried to throw off the yoke of Muslim rule.³⁶ The fact that the Umayyad caliphs could not exercise effective control over Sind transformed the province into a haven for refugees from the central part of the caliphate, who had fled for a variety of reasons. Among the refugees we may note the sons of Muḥallab b. Abi Ṣufrah, who fled to Sind after an unsuccessful revolt against the caliph.³⁷ A group of Khawārij escaped there after a defeat in 129/746-747.³⁸ Rather interesting is the case of Manṣūr b. Jumhūr, who had a chequered career in Syria and Iraq in the last years of the Umayyad dynasty. He was a supporter of the *qadari* views of Ghaylān al-Dimashqī³⁹ and participated in the conspiracy that led to the murder of the caliph al-Walid.⁴⁰ According to one report, he presented the head of al-Walid to the new caliph, Yazīd, who then appointed him governor of Iraq in 126/744.⁴¹ He was dismissed, however, before the year was over.⁴² In 127 he took part in the abortive *shī'i* revolt of 'Abd Allāh b. Mu'āwiya. When the revolt was crushed in 129/746-747, Manṣūr managed to escape to Sind.⁴³ The Umayyad governor of the province refused to give him refuge, despite being his relative. Manṣūr therefore waged war against him, besieging him in Manṣūrah and subsequently executing him. The advent of the 'Abbāsī dynasty found Manṣūr in control of Sind; two 'Abbāsī military expeditions were necessary to crush him and restore the province to caliphal rule.⁴⁴

The material in classical Arab histories concerning Sind under the 'Abbāsīs is no less deficient than that relating to the Umayyad period. On some topics, however, it can be supplemented by material gleaned

³⁶ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 444; al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 378-380, 389. On the city of Manṣūra see also M.A. Pathan, "Present ruins of al-Manṣūra," *Islamic Culture* 42 (1968), 25-33.

³⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* II, 1410-1413; al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 372-373.

³⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* II, 1946.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1837.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1778, 1800, 1803-1804.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1809, 1836.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1854.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1883-1885, 1979.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* III, 72, 75, 80; al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 444; al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 407, 429. Al-Mas'ūdī (*op. cit.* I, 379) does not, therefore, seem to be right in considering Manṣūr governor of Sind on behalf of the Umayyads.

from other sources. The first event of the 'Abbāsī period recorded by al-Balādhurī⁴⁵ is the abovementioned dispatch of the two expeditionary forces against Manṣūr b. Jumhūr. Only after defeating him could the 'Abbāsī governor turn to the expansion of the territory under Muslim rule. The caliph al-Manṣūr also had to send forces to crush a rebellious governor.⁴⁶ Al-Mahdī is said to have appointed several governors to rule the province. We hear of one of them that he held office for twenty days before being dismissed; another ruled also for a very short period; still another did not even reach the province assigned to him.⁴⁷ Al-Ma'mūn had to appoint a new governor after the incumbent refrained from transferring the taxes collected in Sind to the capital.⁴⁸ The frequent change of governors was one of the main reasons for the instability of Arab rule in Sind.

The 'Abbāsīs had also to contend with a phenomenon which is not recorded in the descriptions of Sind in the Umayyad period. Arab chieftains, not appointed by the central government, managed to gain hold over certain areas and ruled there independently. These chieftains are called *mutaghalibah* and it seems that a considerable part of the military effort was devoted to raids on these independent principalities.⁴⁹ The power of these independent rulers probably increased with the weakening of the 'Abbāsī caliphate. Ibn Ḥawqal says that the ruler of Multān is not subject to anyone, though the 'Abbāsī caliph is mentioned in the Friday *khuṭbah*.⁵⁰ It should also be pointed out that Sind was not spared the feud between Qays and Yaman. Al-Ya'qūbī sees this feud as the dominant trait of the history of Sind during the days of Hārūn al-Rashīd.⁵¹ Elsewhere he says that when there was a wave of this feud, it erupted first of all in Sind (*wa kānat al-'aṣabiyya bi-'l-sind awwal mā waqa'at*).⁵²

Another serious problem was created by the rebellions of the Indian tribe of the Jats, referred to in Arabic sources as Zuṭṭ. The Muslims came into contact with the Zuṭṭ very early, both in India and in the

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⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, 444.

⁴⁶ Al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 448–449.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* II, 479–480.

⁴⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* (Leiden, 1851–1876) VI, 288–289.

⁴⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 445; al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 429.

⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥawqal, *op. cit.*, 322. See also *ibid.*, 324 (where a similar statement is made regarding Ṭūrān) and 325 (regarding Makrān).

⁵¹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 493–494; cf. also al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 446.

⁵² Al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 480.

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⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 436.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 171,

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⁵⁹ Ibn al-Ath

⁵⁸ Al-Balādh

⁶⁰ Ibn al-Af

⁶¹ See Ham

central Islamic lands. Some of the Zuṭṭ seem to have reached Syria and Iraq even before the major Arab incursions into India, and Mu'āwiya is said to have transferred Zuṭṭ living in Basra to the coastal region of Syria in 49 or 50/699-671. In Antioch and in one of the provincial towns in its district, there was an area known as the Zuṭṭ quarter.⁵³ The early Arab raiders of Sind encountered the Zuṭṭ several times and Budayl b. Ṭahfa al-Bajalī, who fought in Sind just before the invasion of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, may have been killed by them.⁵⁴ One of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim's lieutenants is said to have brought with him 4000 Zuṭṭ from a raid.⁵⁵ Zuṭṭ in considerable numbers seem to have been brought to Iraq and Syria by al-Ḥajjāj, following the invasion of Sind by Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim. Here they were turbulent people, attracting to themselves disgruntled elements such as escaped slaves and *mawālī*, and lived on brigandage.⁵⁶ In India itself we hear of rebellions of the Zuṭṭ during the reign of al-Mahdī.⁵⁷ Al-Ma'mūn sent one of his commanders to fight the Zuṭṭ in 205/820-821, but it is not clear whether this operation was conducted in Sind or elsewhere.⁵⁸ An expedition against the Zuṭṭ, organized by al-Mu'taṣim, resulted in their reduction to the status of *ahl al-dhimma*.⁵⁹

Little is known of the affairs of Sind during the later part of the 'Abbāsī period. In 257/870-871 the province came under the rule of the Ṣaffārī Ya'qūb b. al-Layth.⁶⁰ At about the same time the Ismā'īlīs became active in Sind and in 354/965 they succeeded in establishing in Multān an independent principality which lasted until its destruction by Maḥmūd of Ghaznā.⁶¹

In concluding this part of our study, we may say that Muslim rule in Sind was far from stable in the period under discussion. The frequent changes of governors, the factional feuds within the Arab community and the perennial threat of conflict with local factors were the main reasons for this instability. It is clear that under these conditions

⁵³ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 162.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 436.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 171, 375-376; al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.* III, 1044, 1045, 1426. The statement in *EP*, s.v. Djāt, that "they seem to have taken to a settled and peaceful life both in Sind and abroad," must therefore be modified.

⁵⁷ Al-Ya'qūbī, *op. cit.* II, 479-480.

⁵⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *op. cit.* VI, 256.

⁵⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 445-446.

⁶⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *op. cit.* VII, 171, 226.

⁶¹ See Hamdani, *The Ismā'īlī dā'wa in Northern India* (Cairo, 1956).

Sind could not develop into a significant centre of cultural activity, and the claim of some scholars to the contrary cannot be maintained in the light of the evidence available.⁶²

II

We have hinted earlier that the process of conversion is one of the most intriguing problems of Indo-Muslim history. It is, however, also an extremely elusive one. The invasion of India was within the scope of Muslim hopes and expectations at a relatively early period of Islamic history. The collections of *ḥadīth* contain a number of traditions which attribute the intention of attacking India to the Prophet himself, and extol the would-be participants in the envisaged attack. According to one tradition, Abū Hurayra is reported to have said: "The Prophet promised us to attack India. If I live long enough to participate in the raid, I shall spend my life and property on it. If I am killed, I shall be the best martyr; if I return, I shall be Abū Hurayra, the one who was saved (from hell-fire)" (*wa'adanā rasūl allāh ghazwat al-hind fa-in adraktuhā unfiq fihā nafsī wa māli wa in qultu kuntu afḍal al-shuhadā' wa in raja'tu fa-anā abū hurayra al-muḥarrar*).⁶³ A tradition of apocalyptic character, attributed to the Prophet, reads: "Verily, an army of yours will attack India. God will give it victory and it will bring their (i.e. the Indians') kings fettered in chains. God will forgive the sins of the members of the army, they will leave (India) and will find 'Isā b. Maryam in al-Shām . . . (*la-yaghzuwanna al-hind lakum jaysh yaftah allāh 'alayhim ḥattā ya'tū bi-mulūkihim mughallalīn bi-'l-salāsīl yaghfir allāh lahum dhunūbahum fa-yanṣarifūn hīna yanṣarifūn fa-yajidūn b. maryam bi-'l-shām*).⁶⁴ Another tradition extolling the participants in the predicted attack on India reads: "God saved two groups of my community from hell-fire: a group which will attack India and a group which will be (at the end of days) with 'Isā b. Maryam" (*'iṣābatāni min ummati aḥrazahumā allāh min al-nār 'iṣāba taghzū al-hind wa 'iṣāba takūn ma'a*

⁶² See on this point Friedmann, "The beginnings of Islamic learning in Sind — a reconsideration," *BSOAS* 37 (1974), 659–664.

⁶³ Nasā'ī, *Sunan* (Cairo, n.d.) vi, 42. Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Athar*, s.v. ḥ-r-r; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-Kubrā* (Hyderabad, 1319) II, 112.

⁶⁴ Nu'aym b. Hammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, BM Or. 9449, fol. 113a. Al-Shām is believed to be the place in which the war between the *dajjāl* and the Messiah will take place before the Day of Judgment.

'isā b. maryam).⁶⁵ particularly exalted Muslims who will

While it is not possible to conclude that the process of conversion in the first century was considerably earlier than the conclusion that the process of conversion regarding to conversion are insufficient evidence to conclude that the process actually led to the conversion of the Indian subcontinent. The sources expressing the words of V.A. Smith regarding the dramatic sudden position of dominance might be said to be an explanation that the astounding facts, enough, some historians in the face of a evidence resulted in partial Islamization. He tried to convert them they find it difficult deavours.⁶⁶ But the close connection of the Indian caste-ridden, democratic exclusive prerogative ly egalitarian and believers, whatever this essential di-

⁶⁵ Nasā'ī, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ For tradition sometimes identified 2221, 2258–2259.

⁶⁷ V.A. Smith,

⁶⁸ See, for instance 30 ff.; A.K. Warder

'*isā b. maryam*).⁶⁵ This tradition gives the warriors who attack India a particularly exalted status: They are considered equal with those virtuous Muslims who will fight the anti-Christ (*dajjāl*) at the end of days.⁶⁶

While it is not possible to fix the exact date when these traditions came into being, it is reasonable to assume that they date from a period considerably earlier than that of the collections themselves. We may thus conclude that the conquest of India was one of the Muslim aspirations in the first centuries of the Islamic era. This cannot be said, however, regarding to conversion of the Indians. The sources presently available are insufficient even for a preliminary sketch of the processes that eventually led to the conversion to Islam of a quarter of the population of the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, only rarely do we encounter in the sources expressions of desire to convert the indigenous population. The words of V.A. Smith, that "the rapidity of the spread of Islam . . . and the dramatic suddenness with which the adherents of his creed rose to a position of dominant sovereignty constitute one of the marvels, or it might be said the miracles of history," and that "no cut-and-dried explanation that can be offered is felt to account adequately for the astounding facts,"⁶⁷ are therefore still valid to a large extent. Naturally enough, some historians have been unwilling to admit such a surrender in the face of a major historical problem, and the dearth of positive evidence resulted in the emergence of various theories to explain the partial Islamization of India. Some historians say that the early invaders tried to convert forcibly the inhabitants of the occupied areas, though they find it difficult to estimate the results of these proselytizing endeavours.⁶⁸ But the explanation that gained the greatest currency sees a close connection between the conversion to Islam and the social structure of the Indian population. It is well known that Indian society is caste-ridden, denying the low castes rights and privileges that are the exclusive prerogative of the high castes. Islam, on the other hand, is ideally egalitarian and in theory does not make any distinction between the believers, whatever their economic and social standing. On the basis of this essential difference between Islam and Hinduisim, some scholars

⁶⁵ Nasā'ī, *op. cit.* vi, 43.

⁶⁶ For traditions concerning the coming of *dajjāl* and his fight with the Messiah, sometimes identified with 'Isā b. Maryam, see, e.g., Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo, 1955) iv, 2221, 2258–2259.

⁶⁷ V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford, 1961), 38.

⁶⁸ See, for instance, Murray T. Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan* (Calcutta, 1959), 30 ff.; A.K. Warder, *An Introduction to Indian Historiography* (Bombay, 1972), 7.

have argued that members of the low castes needed little persuasion to embrace Islam, which saved them from the disabilities imposed upon them by the Hindu society and drastically enhanced their social status.⁶⁹ A recent study of Bengali Muslims claims that the Bengalis were attracted by the democratic and egalitarian message of Islam and entered its fold *en masse*.⁷⁰ I.H. Qureshi, whose work on the history of Islam in the subcontinent has now become almost a classic, says that "to many Islam appeared as a deliverer from the tyranny of Hinduism and the example of tolerance set by the Arabs seems to have inclined many a Buddhist heart towards Islam."⁷¹ Indeed, some modern observers have thought that the desire for social betterment was a reason which encouraged members of the lower castes to embrace Islam. Speaking of the degraded castes of Malabar, the 1881 census report says: "The honour of Islam' once conferred on a Cheruman or one of the other low castes, he moves, at one spring, several places higher than that which he originally occupied . . ."⁷² However, with regard to the early period of Muslim incursions into India and, one may say, for the medieval period in general, this theory is beset with so many problems that recently it has been described as "more plausible than persuasive".⁷³ The argument saying that the down-trodden elements of the Indian population saw in Islam a social order which was capable of liberating them from the oppression from which they suffered, does not give adequate consideration to the Hindu belief according to which the social status of a person is part of the unchangeable world order in which each person and each caste must ungrudgingly perform the duties imposed on it.⁷⁴ To say that

⁶⁹ Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), 82; Abdur Rauf, *Renaissance of Islamic Culture and Civilization in Pakistan* (Lahore, 1965), 74-79; W.W. Hunter, "The religions of India," *The Times* (February 25, 1888) (quoted in Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* [London, 1896], 229-230); Ram Gopal, *The Indian Muslims* (Bombay, 1964), 1; Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1961), 1.

⁷⁰ Mahmud Shah Qureshi, *Étude sur l'évolution intellectuelle chez les Musulmans du Bengale 1857-1947* (La Haye, 1971), 14-15.

⁷¹ I.H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (The Hague, 1962), 42.

⁷² L. McIver, ed., *Imperial Census 1881. Madras Presidency I*, 39-40; W. Logan, *Malabar* (Madras, 1887-1891) I, 197; T.K. Gopal Panikar, *Malabar and its Folk* (Madras, 1901), 171-172.

⁷³ P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), 10. Cf. S. Digby, *War-horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate* (Oxford, 1971), 12.

⁷⁴ H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (New York, 1960), 40-41, 106, 151-153, 163; cf. K.S. Lal, *Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India* (Delhi, 1973), 193.

the adoption of Islam to free themselves from the disabilities imposed by the Hindu society did not permeate the whole of India, this is a valid argument. In medieval India, embracing Islam was one of the ideologies in which the lower castes saw themselves as a means of saying that if they converted a certain percentage of Muslims would be substantially reduced. The difficulties also found to substantiate the notion that early Muslims saw Islam in their dealings with polytheism more as a means intended to describe the world as it would be seen from an Islamic monotheistic point of view. The mean, of course, was to leave the caste system as an intricate one and no consideration should be necessarily result in discriminatory practices against Indian Muslims, and the basic tenet to enhance their social status are in some places rejected to discrimination.

⁷⁵ About the early Muslim views of India.

⁷⁶ Ghaus Ansari, *passim*; Satish C. Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*; *Homo Hierarchicus*; Imtiaz Ahmad, ed., F. Buchanan, *A J Malabar* (London, Angeles, 1972) II,

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the adoption of Islam was an expression of the desire of the low castes to free themselves from the limitations imposed on their personal freedom by the Hindu society is to assume that the aforementioned Hindu belief did not permeate the low classes of the Hindus. One may doubt whether this is a valid assumption; it is not self-evident that the low castes of medieval India really nourished a desire to "liberate" themselves by embracing Islam. The entire theory seems to be a reflection of modern ideologies in which the desire of the "down-trodden masses" to "liberate" themselves is an assumption of unassailable validity. And it goes without saying that if this desire had been dominant in medieval India, the percentage of Muslims in the population of the subcontinent ought to be substantially higher than it actually is. This theory is fraught with difficulties also from another point of view. There is no evidence to substantiate the notion that out of their many ideals and articles of faith the early Muslims singled out, or even referred to, the ideal of social equality in their dealings with the local population. Since they knew about Indian polytheism more than about the Indian social system,⁷⁵ and probably intended to describe their faith in contradistinction to that of the Indians, it would be safer to assume that in talking about Islam they stressed Islamic monotheism rather than Islamic social equality. This does not mean, of course, that in certain cases the desire to join the Muslim society and leave the caste system did not play its role; but the question is an intricate one and requires much further research. For instance, due consideration should be given to the fact that the adoption of Islam did not necessarily result in the abolition of caste and in the discontinuation of discriminatory practices. The institution of caste still exists among the Indian Muslims, despite the glaring contradiction between its existence and the basic tenets of Islam. Members of low castes do not necessarily enhance their social status by conversion. Muslim sweepers, for instance, are in some places prevented from entering mosques or, at least, subjected to discriminatory treatment while attending prayer.⁷⁶ Describing

⁷⁵ About the early Muslims' knowledge of Indian polytheism, see my "Medieval Muslim views of Indian religions", *JAOS* 95 (1975), 214-221.

⁷⁶ Ghaus Ansari, *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh* (Lucknow, 1960), 50, 55, and *passim*; Satish C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* (London, 1964), 129-149, Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, 85; Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), 20; L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus. The Caste System and its Implications* (London, 1970), 208-212; Imtiaz Ahmad, ed., *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims* (Delhi, 1973). F. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (London, 1807) III, 9; II, 527. David G. Mandelbaum, *Society in India* (Los Angeles, 1972) II, 545 ff.

the conversion of Hindus to Islam in Sind, Burton says that the prospective convert "is taken to the house of a Kazi, who chooses him a name. Finally, he mentions some caste into which he wishes to be received and is circumcised with all due solemnity."^{76a} In the Indian context, therefore, the attractiveness of Islam was less powerful than it might ideally have been.

In any case, the sources which serve as the basis of this study hardly provide even a hint in the direction of the aforementioned theory. This seems to be the case also regarding the later periods of Indo-Muslim history.⁷⁷ One may argue that this is due mainly to the nature of our sources, which concentrate on the military side of historical developments and pay little attention to other matters; this argument is, however, valid only partly, because the sources analysed here do refer occasionally to matters of conversion, but not as a means of social betterment. Several traditions speak of conversion in the wake of Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim's conquest. The people of Chana(?) embraced Islam after a spy sent by them went to the Muslim army camp, saw the commander conducting prayer and was impressed and overawed by the unity and discipline displayed by the Muslims on that occasion.⁷⁸ Speaking about the period of Mu'āwiya, Firishta says that "some Indians" (*ba'zī az mardum-i hind*) embraced Islam at that time.⁷⁹ Other traditions recorded by Bhakkari and describing events following the conquest are worded ambiguously. After the Muslims conquered a fort defended by the sons of Dāhir and most of its defenders were killed, a few survivors "offered obedience to Islam" (*itā'at-i islām namūdand*).⁸⁰ This phrase may be understood to mean that they embraced Islam; it is, however, equally legitimate to interpret it as a reference to political submission to the Muslim conqueror, not necessarily implying a change of religious affiliation. The same ambiguity envelops Bhakkari's statement that the kings and princes of Qannawj "submitted to Islam" (*dar itā'at-i islām āmadand*) and agreed to pay tribute.⁸¹ Al-Balādhuri, whose wording is free of the

^{76a} Richard F. Burton, *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus* (Karachi, 1973; reprint of London, 1851, edition), 358.

⁷⁷ K.S. Lal, *op. cit.*, 164.

⁷⁸ Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, 22-23. Lal (*op. cit.*, 98) asserts that conversions were made also after the conquest of Daybul and Multān, but the sources quoted by him do not support his statement. Al-Balādhuri (*op. cit.*, 440) speaks about 6000 guardians of the Multān temple who were taken prisoner, not converted. In his description of the conquest of Daybul al-Balādhuri does not refer to conversions either.

⁷⁹ Firishta, *Tārīkh* (Lucknow, 1321), 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

ambiguity of Bhakkari, Indian princes to embrace *al-islām wa al-ṭā'at* of their principalities to the Muslims. According to the sources, they responded positively to the offer of 'Usayfān embraced Islam. He had been disappointed. He killed the priest and merchants to his kingdom. Mahrūk b. Rāyiq, who had approached him, had the request to transfer the ruler responded favourably and knew its language of Islam. Later, the king and translated the Qur'ānic meaning into secret, however, for *al-islām khawf min*. He also built for himself, pretending that he was a reports that the king (*numāyad*), but the traditions do not support of social equality, society.

Even earlier cases, tinge, are recorded

⁸² Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*, in battle by Junayd b.

According to another was an Indian king who him a person who wrote (Cairo, 1940) II, 202;

⁸³ Al-Balādhuri, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Buzurg b. Shari' pointed out here that he kept his conversion secret

⁸⁵ *Hudūd al-'Ālam* (1937), 91.

ambiguity of Bhakkari, reports that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz called on Indian princes to embrace Islam and accept his authority (*yad'ūhum ilā al-islām wa al-ṭā'ah*), with the provision that they would remain rulers of their principalities and enjoy equality of rights and obligations with the Muslims. According to this report, Jaysinha and other princes responded positively and even adopted Arab names.⁸² The Hindu king of 'Usayfān embraced Islam during the reign of al-Mu'taṣim after he had been disappointed by the failure of local priests to cure his ill son. He killed the priests, destroyed their temple and invited some Muslim merchants to his kingdom who offered him their monotheistic creed.⁸³ Mahrūk b. Rāyiq, described as "the greatest king of India", is said to have approached in 270/883-884 the Muslim ruler of al-Manṣūra with the request to translate the laws of Islam into the Indian language. The ruler responded favourably and a learned Muslim, who lived in India and knew its languages, wrote a poem for the king summarizing the laws of Islam. Later, the author of the poem was invited to the court of the king and translated for him a part of the Qur'ān. Convinced of the truth of the Qur'ānic message, the king embraced Islam; he kept his conversion secret, however, for fear of losing his authority (*lam yumkinhu izhār al-islām khawf min buṭlān amrihi wa dhahāb mulkihi*) among his subjects. He also built for himself a house, in which he used to pray secretly, pretending that he attended to matters of state.⁸⁴ A tenth century source reports that the king of Nīnhār "makes a show of Islam" (*musalmānt numāyad*), but the inhabitants of the town are idolators.⁸⁵ These traditions do not support the contention that Islam, because of its message of social equality, spread first of all among the low classes of Indian society.

Even earlier cases of royal conversions, but with a distinctly legendary tinge, are recorded in Indo-Muslim sources. Bhoja, the king of Ujain,

⁸² Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 441. Jaysinha, however, apostatized later and was killed in battle by Junayd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Murri. See *ibid.*, 442.

According to another tradition, which seems to be part of a *shu'ūbī* argument, it was an Indian king who approached 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz with a request to send him a person who would instruct him in Islam. See Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi, *Al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (Cairo, 1940) II, 202; III, 404-405; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (London, 1967) I, 155.

⁸³ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 446.

⁸⁴ Buzurg b. Shahriyār, *'Ajā'ib al-Hind* (Leiden, 1883-1886), 2-4. It may be pointed out here that Shakarwatī Farmāḍ, the king of Malabar, is also said to have kept his conversion secret from his subjects. See *infra*, n. 87.

⁸⁵ *Hudūd al-'Ālam* (Leningrad, 1930), fol. 16a; translation by Minorsky (London, 1937), 91.

saw the the miracle of splitting the moon (*shaqq al-qamar*) and was told by one of the sages of his kingdom that this was a miracle performed by the Prophet Muḥammad. Having ascertained that this really was so, he embraced Islam together with his wazīr. Bhoja, whose name was changed to 'Abd Allāh at his conversion, died around the year AD 622.⁸⁶ Another tradition, current among the Māpillas of Malabar, speaks about a Hindu ruler of Kerala named Shakarwatī Farmāḍ, who went to Arabia after witnessing the miracle of splitting the moon, met the Prophet in Mecca and embraced Islam. Death prevented him from returning to his country. Some of his associates, however, came to Malabar in 21 AH, established ten mosques in the country and engaged in spreading Islam there.⁸⁷

We may say in summary that the material concerning the conversion of Indians to Islam in the period under discussion is highly inadequate. A few observations may, however, be made. Our sources refer to conversions in two contexts. Some Indians are said to have embraced Islam as a result of the pressures generated by the Arab invasion of Sind and by the establishment of Muslim centres of power on the Indian sub-continent. In these cases the conversion seems to have been rather tenuous and dependent on the continuation of powerful Muslim rule in the area; any weakening of the Muslim hold resulted in numerous cases of apostasy, usually accompanied by annulment of treaties concluded at the time of the conquest. A distinct group of traditions concerns conversions which were caused by miracles witnessed by the convert. With the exception of Ratan, who is said to have been a merchant,⁸⁸ most persons belonging to both groups were princes and kings. While it is possible, and even probable, that the subjects of the converted princes followed their rulers and eventually also embraced the new faith, it is significant to observe that neither the classical histories nor the more popular traditions view the conversion to Islam as means of social betterment. It should also be

⁸⁶ See *Riyāḍ al-Awliyā'*, BM Or. 1745, fols. 138b-139b; For other versions of the story see Rafī' al-Dīn, *Risāla-yi Shaqq al-Qamar*, India Office Ms. D.P. 1145, fols. 195b-196a; and G. Yazdani, "The inscription on the tomb of Abdullah Shah Chungal at Dhar," *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (1909-1910), 1-5. See also my "Qisṣat Shakarwatī Farmāḍ. A tradition concerning the introduction of Islām to Malabar," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 233-258. The full text of these traditions is given there.

⁸⁷ See India Office Ms. Loth 1044, fols. 81b-104b; BM Ms. Or. 1738, fols. 71b-93b. See also my article in *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), where this tradition and its significance are extensively dealt with.

⁸⁸ See *EI*, Suppl., s.v. *Ratan*; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* II, 162-163; "Qisṣat Shakarwatī Farmāḍ," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 242-243.

pointed out that importance in the tradition in this c

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These categori available sources unequivocal as i was a Buddhist catapult at the fl in order to breac which is the so

⁸⁹ I.H. Qureshi

⁹⁰ S.M. Ikram,

⁹¹ R.C. Majum

⁹² I.H. Qureshi

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pointed out that Muslim traders, who are said to have been of major importance in the propagation of Islam, are mentioned only in one tradition in this context.

III

The dearth of historical material and the character of the few sources available inevitably put serious obstacles in the way of the student intending to describe the relationship between the Arab conquerors of Sind and the local population. Nevertheless, modern scholars have done their best to draw a comprehensive and meaningful picture of this relationship. Some of them even made an attempt to gauge the reaction of the local population to the invasion itself and reached the conclusion that certain depressed elements among the inhabitants of Sind did not resist the invasion at all, but rather extended a cordial welcome to the Arab raiders and even offered them assistance in the form of military intelligence, logistics and capitulation without fighting. This attitude is said to have been caused by opposition to Hindu rule or by lack of patriotism. According to Qureshi, who bases himself mainly on the *Chachnāmah*, "there is overwhelming evidence to justify the conclusion that there were many Buddhists who were not averse to Arab conquest and indeed co-operated with the invaders Even if all allowance for the desire to join the winning side is made, the extent of Buddhist antipathy for the Hindus seems to have been considerable."⁸⁹ Ikram says that the Muslims won the sympathies of the oppressed classes and that "perhaps the most important cause of the Arab success was the support of the Jats and the Meds."⁹⁰ R.C. Majumdar, who represents an Indian nationalist point of view, thinks that the work of the Arab invaders was "facilitated by the treachery of certain Buddhist priests and renegade chiefs who deserted their sovereign and joined the invader."⁹¹

These categorical statements notwithstanding, a reconsideration of the available sources leads one to the conclusion that the evidence is not as unequivocal as it might seem to be. Qureshi claims, for instance, that it was a Buddhist priest who told Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim to aim his catapult at the flag and the pinnacle of the temple of Daybul,⁹² apparently in order to break the fighting spirit of the defenders. The *Chachnāmah*, which is the source on which Qureshi's statement is based, explicitly

⁸⁹ I.H. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, 39.

⁹⁰ S.M. Ikram, *Muslim Civilization in India* (New York-London, 1964), 9.

⁹¹ R.C. Majumdar et al., *An Advanced History of India* (London, 1960) pt. 2, 274c.

⁹² I.H. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, 38.

says, however, that it was a Brahman who came out of the besieged fort and made this suggestion to the Arab commander.⁹³ According to al-Balādhurī, this suggestion was made by al-Ḥajjāj.⁹⁴ Qureshi also implies that the prophecy of Indian sages and astrologers predicting the Arab conquest of Sind was fabricated by the Buddhists for the benefit of the Muslims.⁹⁵ It is true that in several places this prophecy is attributed to Buddhist priests;⁹⁶ it is equally true, however, that in other contexts the Arab conquest is predicted by Hindus.⁹⁷ It is true that according to the *Chachnāmāh* the Buddhists of Siwistān were not willing to fight the Arabs; however, according to their own admission, their unwillingness to engage in combat was due to their assessment of the military situation and a corollary of the Buddhist principle of non-violence. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of their words. They say in a message to the Arab commander that the inhabitants of the town have renounced their allegiance to king Bajhrā; they say this, however, out of fear of Arab reprisals against the king's supporters and not out of some ideological opposition to Hindu rule.⁹⁸ The account of the activities of Kāka Kōtal given by Qureshi⁹⁹ is highly selective. When Kāka Kōtal was advised of the plan to attack the Muslims at night, he did not simply tell his followers not to carry out the attack. He mentioned the prophecy regarding the Arab victory, but he also said that he would be pleased if the attack went through successfully (*agar shumārā muyassar gardad nikū bāshad*). He also appointed a commander to head the raiding party, paid the soldiers and gave refuge to King Bajhrā of Siwistān who was pursued by the Arabs. Only after the soldiers lost their way in the darkness of the night, and the whole operation was set at naught, did he go out to the Arabs, tell them of the abortive night raid, and then surrender. It should be pointed out that Kāka Kōtal used his newly-forged alliance with the Arabs in order to plunder the rich people of the area and it seems fairly clear that he was guided in his behaviour by the desire to be on the

⁹³ Kūfī, *Chachnāmāh*, BM Ms. Or. 1787, fol. 47a. The printed edition of Daudpota (Delhi, 1939) is unfortunately not available to me.

⁹⁴ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 437.

⁹⁵ I.H. Qureshi, *op. cit.*, 38.

⁹⁶ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 54a.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 47a, 58a. See also Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, 23, where the prophecy is attributed to the priests and astrologers of Dāhir, who were certainly Hindus like their sovereign.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 53a–53b.

⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*, 38–39.

winning side rather than the losing side. The actions of Mōka Bisāya and Mōka Bisāya and they needed to create a true that Mōka Bisāya patriot would expect a foreign invader, in order to preserve the Hindus. And, that collaborated on the agreement of the mans of Brahman attitude of the Brahman is very similar to When the city of their submission to Arab commander Dāhir, out of her Muḥammad b. al superiority in the office and promise be dismissed.¹⁰³ If they were wont to difficult to argue *Chachnāmāh*, brought society. On the contrary intended to accord to preserve the pre sanction the degradation

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¹⁰⁰ Kūfī, *op. cit.*,

¹⁰¹ Kūfī, *op. cit.*,

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol. 89b

¹⁰³ Kūfī, *op. cit.*,

¹⁰⁴ Kūfī, *op. cit.*,

¹⁰⁵ See some rem

winning side rather than by ideological opposition to Hindu rule.¹⁰⁰ The actions of Mōka Bisāya should be seen in similar light. This chieftain asked Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim to confirm his rule in his ancestral kingdom. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim agreed, entered upon an agreement with Mōka Bisāya and ordered him to supply the Arabs with boats which they needed to cross the Indus and continue their war.¹⁰¹ While it is true that Mōka Bisāya's attitude is not consistent with what a modern patriot would expect of a ruler whose land had been occupied by a foreign invader, it is evident that he collaborated with the Arabs in order to preserve his kingdom, and not because of his antipathy towards the Hindus. And, in any case, the Buddhists were not the only element that collaborated with the Arabs. The *Chachnāmā* has a long chapter on the agreement concluded by Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim with the Brahmans of Brahmanābād. Reading this chapter, one clearly sees that the attitude of the Brahmans, as described by the author of the *Chachnāmā*, is very similar to that of the Buddhist chieftains and the *sumaniyya*. When the city of Brahmanābād was conquered, the Brahmans offered their submission to Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim. In compliance with the Arab commander's demand, they brought Lādi, the consort of King Dāhir, out of her hiding place and surrendered her to the Arabs.¹⁰² Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim then confirmed their traditional position of superiority in the Indian society, entrusted each of them with hereditary office and promised that neither they nor their descendants would ever be dismissed.¹⁰³ He also ordered to pay the Brahmans the taxes which they were wont to collect prior to the Muslim conquest.¹⁰⁴ It is therefore difficult to argue that the Arab conquest of Sind, as described in the *Chachnāmā*, brought about significant changes in the structure of Indian society. On the contrary, the book occasionally sounds like a document intended to accord Islamic legitimization to the Indian social structure, to preserve the prestige and traditional standing of the Brahmans and to sanction the degraded status of the low castes.

The historical value of the *Chachnāmā* is open to serious question and only an exhaustive study of the book may determine which parts of it, if any, can be considered history rather than fiction.¹⁰⁵ But even if we

¹⁰⁰ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fols. 53b-54b; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 159-161.

¹⁰¹ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fols. 59b-60b.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol. 89b; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 182.

¹⁰³ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 90b; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 92a; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 186.

¹⁰⁵ See some remarks on this point in Gabrieli, *op. cit.*, 281-282.

accept its contents at face value, as some scholars seem to have done, it must be concluded that the Buddhists or the depressed classes were not the only element that collaborated with the Arab invaders. The *Chachnāmāh* is almost the only source on which the theory of Buddhist treason is based and it knows also of Brahmans who cooperated with the victorious Arabs in order to retain their traditional position in the Indian society. The Brahmans' surrender of King Dāhir's wife to the Arabs is no less despicable from the point of view of an Indian nationalist than the logistic support given to them by Mōka Bisāya, who is said to have been a Buddhist chieftain and wanted to preserve his kingdom. Neither the Brahmans nor the Buddhists led a resistance movement against the Arabs. According to the *Chachnāmāh*, both tried to adjust as well as possible to the conditions created by the Arab conquest; if collaboration with the invader is blameworthy, the blame should be shared equally between them. The *Chachnāmāh* certainly does not leave one with the impression that the Buddhists acted out of ideological, anti-Hindu motivation. Like their Hindu compatriots, they tried to make the best of the situation in which they found themselves, as a result of Arab military successes. Neither the Indian nationalist view, which accuses only the Buddhists of treason, nor the view of some Muslim historians, who see in their collusion with the Arabs an expression of rebellion against Hindu oppression, seems to be justified by the source material available.

The policy adopted by the Arab invaders towards the cities of Sind immediately after the conquest was not uniform. A part of the population of Daybul, for instance, was killed in a massacre lasting three days. Among those slaughtered were the two guardians of the city temple. A mosque was erected in the town;¹⁰⁶ the temple of Iskandara was destroyed,¹⁰⁷ and the temple of Qandahār on the upper Indus, which was conquered by Hishām b. 'Amr al-Taghlibī in the reign of al-Manṣūr, was destroyed and a mosque erected in its stead.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, no harm was done to several other cities, such as Sadūsān, Sāwandarā and Basmad.¹⁰⁹ Of particular interest is the case of Multān, which we have discussed elsewhere.¹¹⁰ Reports on several cities are at variance with one another. Al-Balādhurī does not refer to the temple of Nīrūn,

¹⁰⁶ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 437.

¹⁰⁷ Bhakkarī, *op. cit.*, 28.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 445.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 438–439.

¹¹⁰ Friedmann, "The temple of Multān. A note on early Muslim attitudes to idolatry," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), 176–182.

and from his account that it was left in ruins. Kōt was followed by a mosque which was built there.¹¹³ From the Alor¹¹⁴ we would know a mosque was built and erected in the corner held there. This mosque. The erection of the *Chachnāmāh*,¹¹⁵ famous tradition of the temples the destroyed temples.¹¹⁸ It is a conquest was over to its ancestral faith *dhimma* despite traditions.¹¹⁹

We may now see between the Muslim. It is likely that many lived in towns which only in cities established Maḥfūza, but also Ḥawqal,¹²⁰ there temple. Nevertheless, indigenous Hindu towards the end of (or Ṣaymūr), which

¹¹¹ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*

¹¹² Bhakkarī, *op. cit.*

¹¹³ Kūfī, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁴ For the identity

¹¹⁵ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Fol. 56a; Ellis

¹¹⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁹ For details, see

(1972), 176–182 and

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.*, 431.

¹²¹ This is a correction

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and from his account of the peaceful surrender of the city, it would seem that it was left intact;¹¹¹ Bhakkari reports that the conquest of Nīrūn Kōt was followed by a massacre,¹¹² while the *Chachnāmāh* says that a mosque was built in the city in place of the temple which had been there.¹¹³ From the report of al-Balādhurī about the city of Alrūr or Alor¹¹⁴ we would tend to conclude that its temple was left intact, though a mosque was built in the city;¹¹⁵ according to Bhakkari¹¹⁶ a *minbar* was erected in the courtyard of the temple and congregational prayer was held there. This seems to imply that the temple was transformed into a mosque. The erection of mosques instead of temples was, according to the *Chachnāmāh*,¹¹⁷ a matter of policy, while al-Balādhurī reports the famous tradition according to which Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim granted the temples the status of synagogues, churches and Zoroastrian fire-temples.¹¹⁸ It is reasonably clear, however, that after the fury of the conquest was over, the local population was normally allowed to adhere to its ancestral faith and the Hindus were given the status of *ahl al-dhimmah* despite the apparently idolatrous nature of their religious traditions.¹¹⁹

We may now endeavour to describe the relationship which developed between the Muslims and the other communities in the cities of Sind. It is likely that most Muslims, both Arabs and converts of local origin, lived in towns which were under Muslim rule. This was the case not only in cities established by the Muslims, such as al-Manṣūra and al-Maḥfūza, but also in a city like Multān in which, according to Ibn Ḥawqal,¹²⁰ there were no idolators except for the guardians of the temple. Nevertheless, Muslims could be found also in areas under indigenous Hindu potentates. The anonymous *Ḥudūd al-Ālam*, written towards the end of the tenth century, speaks of Muslims living in Ṣamūr (or Ṣaymūr), which was under the rule of Balharā,¹²¹ and in Wayhind

¹¹¹ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 437–438.

¹¹² Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, 21.

¹¹³ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 52b; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* i, 158.

¹¹⁴ For the identity of these two names see *ibid.*, 363.

¹¹⁵ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 439.

¹¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Fol. 56a; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* i, 164.

¹¹⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 439.

¹¹⁹ For details, see Friedmann, "The temple of Multān," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), 176–182 and the bibliography quoted there.

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.*, 431.

¹²¹ This is a corrupted form of the Indian title Vallabha-rāja, borne by the sove-

which was under the jurisdiction of Jaypāl.¹²² In Şaymūr and Sindān there were also congregational mosques.¹²³ Al-Balādhurī¹²⁴ reports a case in which such a mosque was left intact even after a city, which had been under Muslim rule, was reconquered by the Indians; the Hindus apparently did not deem it necessary to celebrate their victory by destroying the Muslim place of worship or by transforming it into a temple. Some of the Hindu dynasties, such as the rulers of al-Ṭāqī (or Ṭāfan), were known for their sympathy for the Arabs.¹²⁵ In the territories ruled by the Rāshtrakūtas,¹²⁶ who are also said to have been known for such an attitude,¹²⁷ the Muslims enjoyed political and judicial autonomy. They were ruled by a Muslim appointed by Balharā. Their judicial matters were also settled by a Muslim and there is some evidence to suggest that they were tried in accordance with the *sharīʿah*.¹²⁸ The testimony of a non-Muslim was not considered valid against a Muslim. Only in places where the Muslims were few was the testimony of a non-Muslim accepted, if he was known for his integrity and if the Muslim community considered him trustworthy (*in . . . zakkāhu al-muslimūn*).¹²⁹ An example of judicial autonomy is related by Buzurg b. Shahriyār:¹³⁰ A Muslim sailor desecrated an idol in the city of Şaymūr; the ruler of the city declared that, according to his agreement with the Arabs, he did not have the authority to pronounce sentence in such a case. The sailor was put to death only after the ruler had consulted the Muslim judge, who stated that should a man commit such a sacrilegious act in a mosque, he would also suffer capital punishment.

We have seen above that the Hindus living in areas under Muslim rule were accorded the status of *ahl al-dhimma*.¹³¹ The decision to do

reigns of the Rāshtrakūta dynasty. See Sauvaget, ed., *Akhbār al-Şīn wa al-Hind* (Paris, 1948), 51; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 354–358; *ET*², s.v.

¹²² *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, fols. 14b–15a, 16a; transl. by Minorsky, pp. 88, 92; Al-Balkhī, *Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (Leiden, 1927), 173; Ibn Ḥawqal, *op. cit.*, 320.

¹²³ Ibn Ḥawqal, *op. cit.*, 320, 324.

¹²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 446.

¹²⁵ Masʿūdī, *op. cit.* I, 382.

¹²⁶ Balharā in the language of our sources.

¹²⁷ Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, 12; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 354–358; Al-Masʿūdī, *op. cit.* I, 381. The king of al-Jurz, on the other hand, is said to have been inimical to the Arabs. See Sauvaget, *loc. cit.*, and 51 (for the identification of the place); Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 358–360; Reinaud, *Relation des voyages . . .* (Paris, 1845) I, 26.

¹²⁸ Buzurg b. Shahriyār, *op. cit.*, 190–161.

¹²⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal, *op. cit.*, 320.

¹³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 142–144.

¹³¹ See *supra*, n. 119.

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¹³² *Op. cit.*, 44.

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¹³⁴ Reinaud, “
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¹³⁶ *Op. cit.* I, 4

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this is attributed in some sources to Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, but we may safely assume that this attribution is a reflection of later developments of the *sharī'ah*. Al-Balādhurī refers in several passages to *kharāj* and *jizya* which were imposed on the non-Muslim inhabitants of the occupied territories. One of these passages deserves special attention; it refers to the activities of 'Imrān b. Mūsā, a scion of the famous Barmakī family, who was appointed to the governorship of Sind by the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim in 221/835-836. Having described several victories of 'Imrān, al-Balādhurī¹³² says: "Then he summoned the Zuṭṭ who were in his vicinity. They came to him and he sealed their hands, collected the *jizya* from them and ordered that whenever anyone of them is met (out of doors), he should have a dog with him. And the price of a dog reached 50 dirhams" (*thumma nādā bi-'l-zuṭṭ alladhina bi-ḥaḍratihī fa-atawhu fa-khatama aydiyahum wa akhadha al-jizya minhum wa amarahum an yakūn ma'a kull rajul minhum idhā "turiḍa 'alayhi kalb fa-balagha al-kalb khamšina dirhaman*). The beginning of the passage does not give rise to any particular difficulties: The imposition of *jizya* and the "sealing" of the hands (or of the necks) are well-attested procedures regarding *ahl al-dhimma*.¹³³ The last part of the passage is more difficult: It is not clear why the amir ordered the Zuṭṭ to be accompanied by dogs. Reinaud, who translated al-Balādhurī's chapter on Sind more than a century ago, suggested that the purpose might have been to diminish the number of (stray?) dogs.¹³⁴ This view was quoted in a more recent work by Murgotten.¹³⁵ Elliot and Dowson¹³⁶ speculate whether the "tribute dogs" were taken by the Arabs to be slaughtered or to be kept for hunting or whether the order was issued to encourage the breeding of the dogs. It seems, however, that none of these can be the correct interpretation. The regulation concerning the dogs follows immediately after two other actions which are characteristic of Muslim treatment of *ahl al-dhimma*, and we should therefore first of all consider the possibility that it also belongs to this category. Indeed, it is a distinct possibility that we are

¹³² *Op. cit.*, 445-446.

¹³³ See de Goeje's glossary to al-Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 35; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. *khatama*; Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Ma'ālim al-Qurba* (Cambridge, 1938), 41; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām Aḥl al-Dhimma* (Damascus, 1961) II, 762; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (Cairo, 1352), 117.

¹³⁴ Reinaud, "Fragments Arabes et Persans relatifs à l'Inde," *Journal Asiatique* (1845), 189, n. 1.

¹³⁵ *The Origins of Islamic State* (New York, 1924) pt. 2, 232.

¹³⁶ *Op. cit.* I, 449.

faced here with a sort of *ghiyār*, a device by which the *dhimmīs* are humiliatingly distinguished from the Muslims. Though such a custom does not seem to be attested in literature describing the disabilities imposed on the *dhimmīs* in other Muslim countries, there is some corroborative evidence to suggest that this was the real reason behind the regulation instituted by 'Imrān b. Mūsā. According to a tradition included in the *Chachnāmāh*, Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim asked Mōka Bisāya and his minister about the position of the Jats (Zuṭṭ) of Lōhāna under the rule of Chach and Dāhir. He was told that they suffered from inferior status. Among the disabilities imposed upon them, "they used to take their dogs with them when they went out of doors, so that they might by this means be recognized" (*wa chūn az khāna bīrūn rawand sagi-rā bā khwud burdandī kih ma'rifat-i ishān mubārhan shudī*).¹³⁷ Hearing all this, Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim is said to have been convinced that the Jats should be kept in their inferior position and ordered that they continue to observe the discriminatory laws promulgated by the deposed Brahman dynasty (*muḥammad-i qāsim bar ān nahj wa namaṭ ishān-rā lāzim dāsh*t).¹³⁸ The dog is an unclean animal in both Hindu and Muslim traditions¹³⁹ and it was therefore possible to adopt this humiliating custom into the Muslim context and add it to the discriminatory regulations concerning the Zuṭṭ under Muslim rule. Again we are faced with a tradition according to which Islam did not change the caste-ridden structure of the Indian society, but rather perpetuated it.

IV

Summing up, we may say that it is not possible to force the complexities of the situation in Muslim Sind into the strait-jacket of any modern ideology. The theory according to which the spread of Islam in Sind was influenced by the desire of the low castes to escape from their degraded status by joining the Muslim society cannot be substantiated by available source material. Most traditions point in the opposite direction: They describe conversions of royal and princely personalities. Moreover, some

¹³⁷ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 92b; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* I, 187. In view of this tradition it is difficult to agree with the opinion of Ikrām regarding the Jats and the Meds. See *supra*, p. 325.

¹³⁸ Kūfī, *op. cit.*, fol. 93a.

¹³⁹ For the Hindu tradition, see 'Allāmī, *Ā'in-i Akbarī* (transl. by H.S. Jarret) (Calcutta, 1948) III, 319. For Islam, see Wensinck, *Concordance . . .*, s.v. *kalb*; al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1274) II, 429.

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traditions, mainly in the *Chachnāmah*, describe how the Muslim conquerors confirmed the superior position of the Brahmans and the inferior position of some low classes, such as the Zuṭṭ. These traditions, coupled with the results of modern research concerning the persistence of caste in Indo-Muslim society, cast grave doubts on the validity of the aforementioned theory. It should also be said that the depressed classes and the Buddhists must not be singled out as collaborators with the Arab invaders. The dynasty of Dāhir offered resistance at the beginning of the Arab onslaught, but the son of Dāhir embraced Islam when invited to do so by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. All other political forces mentioned collaborated with the victorious Arabs, though some of them tried to regain their lost territories when the Muslim hold on Sind weakened because of factional strife and internal disturbances in the caliphate.

We have several times pointed out that the source material relevant to our subject is meagre. Some of it is distinctly legendary and reflects popular traditions rather than historical realities. The early history of Muslim Sind was a peripheral topic for the classical Arab historians; it was important only in its relevance to developments at the centre of the caliphate. The Indo-Muslim histories are, of course, different in this respect but the material they have for the early period is so scant that it cannot significantly improve our knowledge of the period. Only for the *Chachnāmah* is the early history of Muslim Sind a central topic; the historicity of this work is, however, open to grave doubts. The nature of the sources thus puts serious limitations on our ability to make an exhaustive study of the early history of Islam in India. We are not able, for instance, to estimate the extent of Islamisation. We cannot draw a truly comprehensive picture of the relationship between the Muslims and the local population and we cannot say whether this relationship developed in any particular direction during the period under discussion. Because of the fragmentary nature of the sources, utmost circumspection is needed in reaching conclusions.